

"The mighty dead
"Who blessed mankind and humanised the world."

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

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A FAITHFUL SHEPHERD BOY.

AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL SHEPHERDS.

GERHARDT was a German shepherd boy, and a noble fellow he was. One day while he was watching his flock, which was feeding in the valley on the borders of a forest, a hunter came out of the forest and asked :

"How far is it to the nearest village?"

"Six miles, sir," replied the boy; "but the road is only a sheep-track, and very easily missed."

The hunter glanced at the crooked track and said, "My lad, I am hungry, tired, and thirsty. I have lost my companions and missed my way. Leave your sheep and show me the road. I will pay you well."

"I cannot leave my sheep, sir," rejoined Gerhardt. "They would stray into the forest."

"Well, what of that?" queried the hunter. "They are not your sheep. The loss of one or more would not be much to your master, and I'll give you more money than you have earned in a whole year."

"I cannot go, sir. My master pays me for my time, and he trusts me with his sheep. If I were to sell my time, which does not belong to me, and the sheep should get lost, it would be the same as if I stole them."

"Well," said the hunter, "will you trust your sheep with me while you go to the village and get some food and drink, and a guide? I will take good care of them for you." The boy shook his head.

"And what? Can't you trust me? Do I look like a dishonest man?"

"Sir," said the boy, "you tried to make me false to my trust, and wanted me to break my word to my master. How do I know you would keep your word to me?"

The hunter laughed, for he felt that the boy had fairly conquered him. He said, "I see, my lad, that you are a good and faithful boy. I will not forget you. Show me the road and I will try to make it out myself."

Gerhardt now offered the contents of his scrip to the hungry man, who, coarse as it was, ate it greedily. Presently his attendants came up, and then Gerhardt, to his surprise, found that the hunter was the Grand Duke, who owned all the country around. The duke was so pleased at the boy's honesty that he sent for him shortly after and had him educated. In after years Gerhardt became a very rich and powerful man, but he remained honest and true to his dying day.

WORKING MEN AND SABBATH INSTRUCTION.

WE value humble toilers, who, with wide-spread shoulders and strong, sinewy hands, do a hard day's work to get bread for their tables, garments to cover, and houses to shelter themselves and families from the cold elements without. If sober and industrious, however rough in their way, they claim our sympathy and esteem. Some of these know and appreciate the blessings of the Sabbath and the place where prayer is wont to be made, while others are utterly indifferent to such institutions, and only use the day of rest for lounging, sensual ease, or idle pleasures. They do not consider their value as a means of improvement and happiness. When we look around us on the Sabbath how few parents do we see with their nicely-dressed children wending their way to a place of worship? We once entered a cottage of industrious, well-to-do people who never entered church or chapel, and inquired why they disregarded the Sabbath and its teachings. The answer was, "We

have our cattle to attend to in the morning; in the afternoon we are glad to get a little rest, and in the evening," said the husband, "I like to spend an hour or two with my neighbours at the public to enjoy a glass of beer, a pipe, and a chit chat." We asked if the needful part of the work and some portion of the pleasure could not be followed by attending one service a day? Could not one brief hour be devoted out of 168 in the week to religious improvement? The husband replied, "I don't know that we get much good by hearing sermons. They may be very excellent, and my neighbour opposite tells me about them sometimes, and says, 'William, you have lost a treat to-day.' 'That may be,' I replied; 'but, somehow, I do not see the good of attending a place of worship, though I confess you, neighbour, always look more cheerful and happy on Sundays than some other folks do who keep indoors all day.'" Here was one item of good. Now let us see if we cannot find a few more. If the blessings of Christian worship are not duly appreciated the fault is with ourselves, by misusing or abusing the institution designed for every man and woman's good. We once knew a man who lived in a comfortable house, surrounded by some acres of land, on which he kept a few cows, and had a wife who was first-rate in the dairy. No one in the country had a better opportunity of getting on in the world, but it invariably happened that difficulties cropped up to hinder his success. People wondered at this, for his land was good and his cattle were sound and healthy, but he was always poor and in trouble. Was it the farm that made him poor? The farm was not in fault, but the farmer was. He did not carefully and diligently use his opportunities; he neglected the culture of his soil; he lounged about in idleness, indulging in a little small talk, strong drink, and a foul pipe every day in the week. He reaped no good, though his advantages were great. He wondered why his farm did not yield him better support. Resolved to find the cause of his failure, the truth at last revealed itself, and from that time forth he determined to alter his plans by reforming his idle habits, forsaking his drinking associates, and sticking closely to work. This movement brought success and happiness to his home. Is not this a true illustration of the man who is indifferent to his religious duties? If not immediately conscious that he loses by his utter neglect of

Sabbath observances, he would soon find his mistake were he to use his opportunities for religious improvement and comfort. How can any one honestly say that he reaps no good from institutions where he is never seen? How can grain be reaped when no seed is sown? Everything depends upon ourselves. If we use Sabbath time for growth in righteousness and goodness we shall soon find its value both to ourselves and our families. The gain will be theirs who make a rightful use of the day, and the loss will fall on those who neglect it. But some, perhaps, will be ready to ask, How can attendance on religious worship enhance domestic comforts? There is no difficulty in proving this. Fathers and mothers are engrossed all the week with their worldly duties — harassed, perhaps, by the perplexities of business, with its ups and downs—with scarcely a spare moment to look into their children's faces. Their home is the common home for all, but little or no sympathy is drawn forth. When, on the Sabbath day, the cares of the week are cast aside, and husband, wife, and children, nicely washed and clad, walk to the religious assembly, where there is true commingling of soul with soul, and all breathe together their mutual aspirations of praise, seeking spiritual light and life, their minds get sound, practical knowledge, their hearts are comforted, and they are enabled to go through the week with energy to combat temptation, and their hearth is cheered with many social and benevolent feelings to which they are strangers who go nowhere. Let working men listen to the advice of a working man on this subject. Mr. W. A. Gibbs, in his poetic address to his toiling fraternisers, says:—

Ay! ay! that bell that rings o' Sunday morning,
If ye would heed it, is like God's voice calling,
To show you a much brighter streak of dawning
Than ye can see when in the pothouse brawling,
Or skulking about lanes, or slowly crawling
(Dead tired with your wasted day of rest),
To lout upon a gate, with arms wide sprawling;
If you would listen, it would give fresh zest
To all your next week's work, and make ye work
your best.
Your children, too, why, bless their little ways!
How they would win upon, and love you more,
If you would give part of this day of days,
To add some knowledge to their scanty store.
Take them to church or chapel, or what's more,
Teach them to read the Bible, say a prayer;
You'll find a pleasure you ne'er felt before,
You'll feel your heart grow lighter of its care,
The sun will brighter shine, you'll breathe a
fresher air.

ARE CONTRADICTORY DOCTRINES TRUE?

"God never offers anything to any man's belief that plainly contradicts the natural and essential notions of his mind; because this would be for God to destroy his own workmanship, and to impose that upon the understanding of man which, whilst it remains what it is, it cannot possibly admit."—*Archbishop Tillotson's Works*, vol. 1, p. 17.

O WHAT confusion to the mind
Do tangled doctrines bring?
In these we never rest can find,
Nor soar on heavenly wing.

We, as into a darkened pane,
With laboured vision gaze,
And find the effort all in vain—
We wander in a maze.

What is revealed is bright and clear,
And purifies the sight,
And mystery cannot enter where
The querist seeks for light.

Now draw a picture, three in one,
And one in three, the same!
A Father, Spirit, and a Son—
O vain and fruitless aim;

Three men are one, and yet are three;
As they stand side by side,
The willow, oak, and poplar tree
Are one; pray, don't deride.

'Tis thus the Athanasian Creed
Its doctrine doth enforce;
The precious document pray read,
What reasoning can be worse?

Yet gravely in his priestly cope
The pastor opes the book,
And hurls perdition, chases hope
From those who fail to look

With meek, unquestioning mind upon
The strangely mystic creed,
Nor deem the hapless soul undone,
Its laws who will not heed.

Thus must he judge, thus must he think,
As man ne'er thought before,
Or into hell for ever sink,
Nor reach the heavenly shore.

With contradictions such as these
The "orthodox" divine
Instructs his flock, nor fears to please,
Nor doubts in heaven to shine.

The Bible which he takes in hand
He mystifies throughout,
And thinks with plainness 'twas not planned,
But filled with clouds and doubt.

And as we read we must believe
The clouded meaning there,
And with blind assent must receive,
Or sink in dire despair.

There are choice texts within the book,
Their import you must see;
That Man who every man forsook
Created you and me.

A God was he, the God Supreme,
Yet human nature bore,
Two natures thus were joined in him,
And him you must adore.

He from his heavenly throne comes down,
The punishment receives,
And from *himself* the awful frown
Descends! O who believes?

O who believes that God and God
Divide and thus oppose
Each other; one receives the rod
Deserved by all his foes.

The other on His throne unchanged
Looks down with angry eye,
And He the direful plan arranged;
O awful mystery!

Yet they are one, so say the creeds
In England read or sung;
One God Supreme falls, dies, and bleeds,
One reigns the stars among.

And these united ever rest
With yet another joined,
The Comforter, the Spirit blest;
Strange union thus entwined!

I ask you plainly, answer me,
Is personality
A separate existence we
Well know, a quality

To every man and woman known
As theirs and theirs alone?
Then how can three in union join
And share the heavenly throne?

Can there be two infinities,
Can three All-seeing be?
Omnipotent Divinities,
Three, and yet one in three?

Ah, me! the clouds are thickening fast,
And darkness hastens now;
Will these confusions ever last?
Is this the Christian's vow?

No! see the awakening dawn appears,
The morning light comes on,
The clouds disperse, the prospect clears,
'Tis heaven on earth begun.

If God is one, as Christians know
(This truth is ne'er denied),
His Deity to none below
He gives, nor doth divide.

Nor doth divide His strength and might
With aught that He hath made;
'Tis His by everlasting right,
As He himself hath said.

O who is this that council shrouds
With ignorance and pride,
And strives to bury truth in clouds
And lead the blind aside?

I would not share my lot with him,
But part these curtains dark,
And raise the banner, chant the hymn
Of Truth, the Christian's ark.

The light is not so far behind,
I see the morning glow;
That true nobility of mind
Which cheereth all below;

And spreadeth light on all that lives,
And shows that "God is one;" *
And he who this grand truth believes
Sees heaven on earth begun.

Horncastle.

ELIZA HADDOCK.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

GOD'S LAWS.—Plato says, God has so framed his laws that it is for the advantage of every one to observe them.

THE Scripture is not in itself so clear as to the doctrine of the Trinity but to require the taking in of external helps to decide the true sense of it.—*Rev. Dr. Wells.*

THE SPLIT IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.—It is said that in Germany the Old Catholics number at least one hundred thousand adult members, including a majority of the Catholic scholars and professors who have distinguished themselves in theological and general literature.

A SERMON CONDENSED.—"When my mother says 'No,' there is no 'Yes' in it." Here is a sermon in a nutshell. Multitudes of parents say "No," but after a good deal of teasing and debate, it finally becomes "Yes." Love and kindness are essential elements in the successful management of children; but firmness, decision, inflexibility, and uniformity of treatment are no less important.

ORTHODOX NOTIONS are very often trifled with by those who make some profession of believing them. Southey once wrote in a lady's album:

For something original, sweet, you would win me;
But tell me, how shall I begin?
For I'm sure that there's nothing original in me,
Unless it's original sin.

And another poet wrote:

O, faithfully did old Parson Flynn
Preach to his flock of original sin;
And his flock took care to practise well
The tenet which off from the pulpit fell;
And said, "The least of all must know
The fountain has a right to flow."

DAILY GOODNESS.—Sin is a terrible blot on the world's page; but perhaps it is a blot, and not the page. For me, I am amazed at the amount of quiet, stolid, unswerving goodness that does not know itself for goodness, but thinks it is simply supporting the family or paying the taxes, or training the children, or doing the sewing, or electing the candidate, or minding its own business generally—goodness that rates itself too low to imagine that the Deity could take any cognisance of it, but which I imagine to be an offering of a sweet savour unto the Lord; goodness which wears no phylacteries and flaunts no banners, nor ever thinks itself meet to enter even the outer court of the sanctuary, but before which, I fancy, the inner doors will one day part, on golden hinges turning.—*Gail Hamilton.*

THE SHAKE OF THE HAND.—There is nothing more characteristic (said Sydney Smith) than shakes of the hand. I have classified them. There is the high official—the body erect, and a rapid shot shake, near the chin. There is the mortmain—the flat hand introduced into your palm, and hardly conscious of its contiguity. The digital—one finger held out, much used by the high clergy. There is the shakus rusticus—when your hand is seized in an iron grasp, betokening rude health, warm heart, and distance from the metropolis, but producing a strong sense of relief on your part when you find your fingers unbroken. The next to this is the retentive shake—one which, beginning with vigour, pauses as it were to take breath, but without relinquishing its prey, and before you are aware, begins again, till you feel anxious as to the result, and have no shake left in you.

WORLDLY AMBITION.—The road ambition travels is too narrow for friendship, too crooked for love, too rugged for honesty, too dark for science, and too long for life.

THE MEEKEST WOMAN.—"Who was the meekest man, my son?" said the superintendent of a boy's Bible-class. "Moses, sir." "Very well, my boy; and who was the meekest woman?" "Please, sir, there never was no meekest woman."

PHYSICAL FORCE RELIGION.—An old agricultural labourer tried a singular method of evangelising his family. Being remonstrated with by the pastor for not "bringing up" his boys as he should, he replied, "I dunno 'ow 'tis, sir; I order 'em down to pray every night an' mornin', an' when they won't go down I knock 'em down—and yet they ain't good!"

BAPTISM CONTROVERSY.—A Presbyterian minister was going out of church and there was a shower of rain falling outside, and the people were therefore detained at the doors, and did not pass out as rapidly as usual, and he said to a distinguished Baptist, who was walking out with him, "What is the reason of this delay?" "I think," answered the other, "there is a shower outside." "Ah!" answered the doctor, "there are quite a number of your persuasion here; they ought not to be afraid of the water." "No," said the brother; "it is not the water, but the sprinkling, that they are afraid of." "Ah," said the Presbyterian, "I know they are afraid of that; and yet it comes from heaven."

GO ON.—Arago, the celebrated mathematician, when a boy, was discouraged by the difficulties he met in his studies, and was on the point of giving them up entirely. But one day some words which he found on the waste leaf used to stiffen the cover of his paper-bound text-book caught his eye and interested him. "Impelled," he says, "by an indefinable curiosity, I damped the cover of the book, and carefully unrolled the leaf, to see what was on the other side. It proved to be a short letter from D'Alembert to a young person disheartened, like myself, by the difficulties of mathematical study, and who had written to him for counsel. 'Go on, sir; go on,' was the counsel which D'Alembert gave him. 'The difficulties you meet with resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed, and light will dawn and shine with increasing clearness on your path.' That maxim," says Arago, "was my greatest master in mathematics." Following out these simple words, "Go on, sir; go on," made him the first astronomical mathematician of his age. Go on, sir, in your studies, in the path of duty, in all your noble resolutions and generous courses, and you will overcome all difficulties, and achieve the prizes of a true success. Arago's words make a good motto for every boy who would rise in the world. To all who read these words we would repeat, "Go on."

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